

**Barnwell County Council
Workshop
November 19, 2010
Minutes**

Barnwell County Council met in a Workshop on November 19, 2010 after a Special Called Meeting. The Workshop began at 10:40 AM. Those in attendance were Chairman Thomas L. Williams, Vice Chairman Travis Black, Councilman Freddie Houston, Councilman Lowell Jowers, Councilman David Kenner, Councilman Keith Sloan, Councilman Joe Smith, and County Administrator Pickens Williams, Jr. Also in attendance were Auditor Jim Fickling, Sheriff Ed Carroll, Emergency Management Director Roger Riley, Hospital Board Chairman, Don Alexander, and Hospital Board Members Kiffany Perlote, James Wallace and Carolyne Williams. Medical Staff present included Dr. Al Waraich, Dr. Ricky Boyles, and Nurse Practitioner Sara O'Neal.

Discussion of Health Care Improvements

Chairman Williams said that project was a long way from a final decision as it would take three readings of ordinances by each Council after the decision is made. He also said that the project is not intended to compete with local doctors but that Council's responsibility is to be sure that good health care is available in Barnwell County.

Kiffany Perlote asked what had initiated the project. Chairman Williams responded that its purpose 12 years ago was to bring additional services to the County and that currently Bamberg County was asking if there was interest in the project. He added that currently financial considerations are an additional concern now.

Councilman Houston said that prior efforts had seemed to be politically driven, but that now there is more of a financial consideration in addition to improved health care services. Both would be addressed if the Hospital were privately run.

Councilman Jowers said that the project would help economic development.

Councilman Sloan stated that more services such as cardiology and vascular were needed. He added that the services that we already provide are done well. He stated that emergency care facilities would be maintained in each County. He added that this endeavor would also help with physician recruitment and patient base in that it would serve 3 Counties with a population of approximately 60 to 70 thousand.

Councilman Kenner stated that he wants the County to have the best possible facilities and services and added that his family had received good services from the current facility.

Dr. Boyles said that he could not comment as he had not seen the proposals.

Dr. Waraich stated that the community needs to offer things that doctor's spouses would like. He stated that the work environment has kept him here for 15 years. He said that in the last several years there have been 27 physicians in the 3 County area but that only 2 have stayed. He added that some physicians feel alienated because they have not been involved in the process. He agreed with Dr. Boyles that it is difficult to provide input without knowledge of the proposals. He said that it would be very difficult to attract sub-specialists to this area. He stated that when the demographics are right, larger hospitals will go to areas on their own without

being asked. He also added that the Hospital needed to be in better financial shape when the Federal Health Care Plan goes into effect.

Chairman Williams stated that he would ask Attorney JD Mosteller if it would be okay to provide the medical staff with copies of the proposals. Councilman Black stated that Council would take its time to make a decision.

Don Alexander said the State said \$250,000 will not go to the Hospital next year. The same with \$125,000 in disproportionate share money. Also, the Hospital expects about \$200,000 less in County funding. He added that reimbursements for indigent health care has decreased. He also stated that the process should help local physicians serve their patients better and applauds the 3 Counties for their efforts to sustain and improve health care in the area.

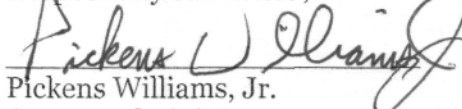
Both Carolyn Williams and Nurse Practitioner Sara O'Neal thanked Council for their efforts. Nurse Practitioner Sara O'Neal stated that 70 percent of her clients are Medicaid patients and that many would need transportation.

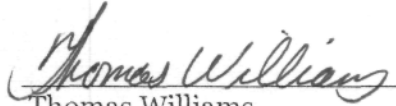
James Wallace asked that the Council consider what is best for the people of Barnwell County and recommended having the medical staff involved in the process.

Chairman Williams thanked everyone for their attendance.

The meeting adjourned at 12:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,


Pickens Williams, Jr.
County Administrator


Thomas Williams
Council Chairman